

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /148 W

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R 061920 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1577

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINGSTON 1104

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT JM

SUBJ: PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES- SEAGA THREATENS TO QUIT

REF: KINGSTON 1081

1. SUMMARY. SUBSEQUENT TO THE REPORT ON SALARIES IN REFTTEL, SEAGA ISSUED A STATEMENT ANGRILY DENOUNCING THE GOVERNMENT'S PROCEDURE ON THE MATTER AND OBLIQUELY THREATENING TO RESIGN. END SUMMARY.

2. LATE IN THE EVENING APRIL 4, EDWARD SEAGA, OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN FOR FINANCIAL MATTERS, ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH DETAILED A LIST OF GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE DEBATE ON PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES LAST WEEK. SEAGA LAMBASTED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ATTEMPT TO DEBATE AND PASS IN ONE DAY THE RESOLUTION ON SALARIES WITHOUT ALLOWING TIME FOR THE PUBLIC TO COMMENT. HE CALLED THE " DEAL" BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS " SHAMEFUL" AND DECRIED THE PERSONAL ATTACKS ON HIM (HE HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF A " DOUBLE-CROSS" BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE). SEAGA SAID THAT, AS A
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RESULT OF ABUSIVE TELEPHONE CALLS FROM UNKNOWN PERSONS ON THE SUBJECT, HE HAD BEEN COMPELLED TO ASK THE TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR A NEW LISTING. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER GIVEN ANYONE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE SUPPORTED THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ADOPTED LAST THURSDAY AND, THEREFORE, HE IS BY NO MEANS GUILTY OF A "DOUBLE- CROSS."

3. SEAGA'S STATEMENT GOES ON TO OUTLINE HIS POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF SALARIES. HE AGREES THAT SALARIES SHOULD BE REGRADED. HE DISAGREES WITH THE EXTENT OF THE INCREASES PROPOSED. THEY ARE EXCESSIVE AND PLACE THE SALARIES ON A PAR WITH THOSE PAID IN FAR MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES. HE TOTALLY OBJECT TO THE HOSE DEBATING AND PASSING THE PROPOSALS IN ONE SITTING.

4. SEAGA THEN WENT INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE DECLINE, IN HIS VIEW, OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE, ASKING WHETHER "IF PARLIAMENT IS NOT A PLACE WHERE MEMBERS CAN SPEAK THEIR MINDS OPENLY AND FREELY WITHOUT BEING BEHOLDEN AND BOUND, THEN IT IS TIME TO CONSIDER WHETHER PARLIAMENT IS NOT BEING REDUCED TO A BARTERING PLACE WHERE PRESSURE BEGETS PRIVILEGE AND, IF SO, WHETHER THOSE WHO CANNOT SUBMIT HAVE ANY GOOD REASON TO BE THERE AT ALL."

5. SEAGA CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT THE FOREGOING IS PRECISELY WHAT HE IS CONSIDERING AT THIS TIME.

6. COMMENT: IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT SEAGA WOULD CARRY OUT HIS THREAT TO RESIGN; HE HAS TOO MUCH AT STAKE IN THE SYSTEM AND TOO LARGE AN EGO TO STEP DOWN. HIS GRANSTANDING IS MORE PROBABLY DESIGNED TO KEEP HIS NAME IN PRINT, NEEDLE THE GOVERNMENT ON A QUESTIONABLE PROCEDURE AND, IN THE LONGER TERM, BUILD HIS CREDENTIALS FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP.
ROBERTS

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